

FWHCA Update Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

October 17, 2013 Meeting Summary

1:30 pm – 3:30 pm
Commissioner's Hearing Room
1 NE 6th Street
Coupeville, WA

Attendees: Susan Berta (teleconference) (Orca Network), Sarah Cassat (Whidbey Island Conservation District), Robin Clark (Whidbey Watershed Stewards), Lowell Dickson (teleconference) (Washington Department of Natural Resources), Steve Erickson (Whidbey Environmental Action Network), Tim Hyatt (Skagit River System Cooperative), Dan Nickel (Watershed Company – Island County's consultant), Pat Powell (Whidbey Camano Land Trust), Sarah Sandstrom (Watershed Company – Island County's consultant), Sarah Schmidt (Whidbey Audubon), Stephen Stanley (DOE – Watershed Characterization Technical Advisory Team), Kira Swanson (Island County), Jennifer Thomas (Parametrix – Island County's consultant), Doug Thompson (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife), George Wilhere (teleconference) (WDFW – Watershed Characterization Technical Advisory Team), Chris Wilson (teleconference) (Polymer Land Consultants)

House Keeping

- **Introductions**
- **Approval of September 17, 2013 Meeting Summary:** The meeting summary was tentatively approved. If anyone had any comments they were to send them to Kira Swanson by September 18, 2013.
 - Please note: No comments were received and the meeting summary was finalized.
- **Approval of TAG Statement of Purpose:** The TAG Statement of Purpose was tentatively approved. If TAG members had comments they were to send them to Kira Swanson by September 18, 2013.
 - Please note: No comments were received and the TAG Statement of Purpose was finalized.
- **Review of Meeting Schedule**
 - Concern regarding data management. Suggested that each publication in the bibliography have a unique identifier number. It was also suggested that there be a separate column for author, date, title, publication etc.

- A request was made to provide abstracts for each item on the BAS Bibliography; TAG member felt that without an abstract it's very difficult to judge relevance of article to BAS record.
- Consultant team stated that abstracts will be provided for those documents which are on the draft final list by the end of this month.
- Concern raised regarding timeline. Not clear when the TAG is suppose to submit comments.
- Concern raised regarding critical areas in the shorelines:
 - It was suggested that the bibliography overlooked the impacts on FWHCA's of activities occurring within the shoreline jurisdiction.
 - Concern that the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) literature review was insufficient for this purpose.
- Concern also raised regarding the Watershed Characterization model and maps and that the information was too coarse to be applicable and that the Watershed Characterization model would more appropriately inform the Comprehensive Plan Update.
- **FTP Site**
 - Request that all documents be put on the FTP site and that the documents for each meeting be saved under a separate folder.
- **Agenda Revisions**
 - The TAG agreed to revise the agenda to focus on the Watershed Characterization. The purpose of this revision was to provide background on the Watershed Characterization model and enable TAG members and staff to effectively evaluate the model and map products.

Watershed Characterization Overview

- **WC and Map Overview by Jennifer Thomas**
 - Comment that rain on snow events are not relevant to Island County. However, ground water plays an important role.
 - Clarification that precipitation in the Puget Lowlands is relatively uniform (compared to mountainous areas). Surficial geology, including recharge, is included in the model.
 - Suggestion that that Doug Kelley, Island County's hydrogeologist, review the model and Doug Kelley's data be included.
 - Noted that landscape groups are divided into coastal and lowland assessment units.
- **Habitat Characterization Model by George Wilhere**
 - Question regarding how land use was designated.

- The designation is based on tax rolls from Island County's Assessor data.
- Question if land uses are aggregated.
- The land uses are clumped together.
- Comment that the land uses identified in the Open Space slide are incorrect.
- Comment that the Assessor's data is often incorrect. For example there may be a 50 acre forested parcel with a small house. However, this parcel may be zoned residential.
- George Wilhere, creator of the Habitat Characterization Model acknowledges that this may be a limitation to the model.
- Question regarding what wetland density is.
- Wetland density is the amount of Assessment Unit (AU) containing wetlands.
- Concern from multiple members of the group that the maps in the Habitat Characterization Model do not reflect their knowledge of Island County and that the model may be too coarse to be accurate.
- George Wilhere, and Jennifer Thomas request the TAG members to identify local data sets and information that could be used to refine the model.
- **Watershed Characterization Examples by Stephen Stanley**
 - Review of case studies and how Watershed Characterization may be applied in Island County.
 - Comment that Watershed Characterization may be better used to identify restoration sites than to inform regulatory updates.
 - Stephen Stanley says that the model has not been used for a FWHCA update.
 - Suggestion that it is a good tool, and that it could be tweaked with refined data.
 - Agreement that additional time was needed to review and discuss the maps.
 - The TAG members decided to have an additional meeting on October 22nd from 1:00-4:00 in the Commissioner's Hearing Room.
- **Public Comments**
 - No comments